



Howard County Council

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COUNCILMEMBERS

Mary Kay Sigaty, Chairperson
District 4
Jon Weinstein, Vice
Chairperson
District 1
Calvin Ball
District 2
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3
Greg Fox
District 5

Minutes (approved)

Monthly Meeting

December 8, 2014

8:30 a.m.

C. Vernon Gray Conference Room

Members Present: Mary Kay Sigaty, Chair; Calvin Ball; Greg Fox; Jen Terrasa; Jon Weinstein

Staff Present: Sheila Tolliver, Administrator; Craig Glendenning, County Auditor

Council Chairperson Mary Kay Sigaty opened the meeting at 8:40 a.m. and called on Dr. C. Vernon Gray, Chair of the Human Trafficking Task Force, to present a summary of the Task Force's report. Dr. Gray was joined by Andrea Ingram, Director of Grassroots, and Amanda Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney and Policy Advisor to the Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention.

Following introductory remarks by Dr. Gray, Ms. Ingram summarized recommendations 1 and 2. Recommendation 1 is to increase the identification rate of trafficking violations. She named four tasks in this regard, as follows: 1) undertake awareness campaigns; 2) present educational materials to related service providers; 3) share screening tools across providers; and 4) implement a central data collection system. Recommendation 2 suggests aiding in the establishment of a provider network to assist victims. She noted four sub-recommendations in this regard, as follows: 1) promote better coordination among providers; 2) support the development of a drop-in day resource center; 3) establish a survivor support trust fund; and 4) expand capacity in existing service providers and provide for coordination among them.

Amanda Rodriguez summarized recommendations 3 and 4. Recommendation 3 suggests developing training and public awareness programs for the public across the state. Implementing this involves 1) teaching parents about trafficking to give them tools to protect their children; 2) taking steps to enlist the help of the public to stop trafficking; 3) training service providers and asking them to implement best practices; and 4) developing prevention programs targeted to children teaching them how to resist traffickers. Recommendation 4 encourages improved law enforcement, an area in which Ms. Rodriguez finds Howard County to excel. She noted that Howard County has had six prosecutions in the past year. She suggested four sub-goals: 1) add resources for interdiction; 2) implement asset forfeiture and use assets seized to fund the survivor trust

fund recommended in recommendation 2; 3) create opportunities for collaboration among agencies; and 4) continue the Human Trafficking Task Force and create a position for someone to head it.

In the follow-up discussion with the Council members, the following questions were raised:

- Dr. Ball asked about monitoring progress and the adoption of State materials.
- Mr. Fox and Mr. Weinstein asked Major Jones from the Howard County Police Department about gangs, collaboration among law enforcement agencies, and resources (people) in the Department to assist with the problem of human trafficking.
- Ms. Terrasa and Ms. Sigaty asked about the education component and prevention.
- Mr. Weinstein asked for elaboration about the State's efforts in training and coordination of agencies.

Ms. Sigaty summarized by stating her opinion that the Task Force should be continued as a subgroup within the Office of Human Rights.

Ray Wacks, former Budget Director speaking as a contractual consultant, and Gale Benson, Acting Budget Director, joined the Council to discuss revenue estimates for Howard County. Mr. Wacks said that the County faces a \$14 million shortfall in the FY 2015 budget, resulting from a drop of 22% in the revenues associated with capital gains reflected in late filings for tax year 2013, received in October 2014. He said that first quarter income tax payments received from the State for the July-September period are up 5% over revenues a year ago.

Ms. Benson reported that the Executive is freezing certain vacant positions and will be asking departments for a plan by December 22 to reduce spending by 5% in the current fiscal year. The Executive's staff also will be looking at one-time spending plans that can be postponed, funds that may have excess that can be held, projects that may be postponed, and similar savings.

Ms. Sigaty asked that the budget representatives plan to report monthly to the Council about the status of revenues between now and the consideration of the FY 2016 budget.

Ms. Sigaty postponed until January discussion of proposed policies and procedures for the Council.

Council members Terrasa and Fox reported that they will have information from MACo and NACo in January and February respectively. Ms. Sigaty reported that the Patuxent River Policy Plan Update, having been approved by member jurisdictions, will go before the General Assembly for adoption in January.

Mr. Fox reported on a problem with some one-day liquor licenses secured by non-profit organizations on behalf of other, for-profit organizations, who use the license to hold one-night nightclubs, some of which are associated with problems. He noted that this is becoming a state-wide problem, and members agreed that the State delegation to the General Assembly should be made aware of the problem and consulted about sponsoring

legislation to correct the problem or to give authority to the Howard County Board of License Commissioners to correct the problem.

The Council Administrator reported that gaps in reporting and other administrative areas identified in 2013 when she returned to work have been resolved. She further reported that the project enhancing the hearing and meeting rooms, as referenced in the RFP, will be complete by the December 15 target. A few additional enhancements made necessary when the contractors found deficiencies in the initial installation of equipment in 2010 may extend beyond that date, but the rooms will be usable. She updated the Council on the RIM project, which is still targeted for roll-out on January 15. In the interest of time, she referred members to the written report distributed with the agenda, which provides additional detail.

The Auditor reported on exit audits completed and underway and on plans for future audits. He reported that he expected his office to expend at least 5% less than budgeted, his primary cost center related to contract cost of external auditors. He indicated a continuing interest in performing a risk assessment and developing an associated audit plan.

Ms. Sigaty reminded members that the external auditors' report on the CAFR will be scheduled for the January monthly meeting. She urged members to submit names for appointment to the Spending Affordability Committee and the APFO committee.

The meeting concluded at 10:40 a.m.